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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA/IPA FOR GOLDBERGER/LENTZ; NSC FOR PASCUAL
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/MEA:MCLOUD/BORODIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN VALLEY CROSSING RE-OPENED TO PALESTINIAN
AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

REF: JERUSALEM 1985

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Bardala/Bisan crossing in the Jordan Valley was reopened to Palestinian agricultural shipments on November 13. As a result, Palestinian farmers plan to export 85 percent of their Jordan Valley agricultural exports through that crossing. Israeli settlers have access to the crossing 24 hours/day, while Palestinians are limited to five hours/day and incur high shipping costs. End summary.

Exports given limited access to crossing

¶2. (SBU) The Bardala/Bisan crossing in the northern West Bank was re-opened to Palestinian agricultural exports on November 13, following its closure to such shipments on October 1, according to Palestinian farmers and USAID contractors. Roughly 85 percent of Palestinian agricultural exports from the Jordan Valley should pass through Bardala/Bisan this season, according to farmers.

Israeli settlers enjoy lower shipping costs

¶3. (SBU) Palestinian farmers have access to the crossing Sunday through Thursday, 1100-1700 hours, and must use the back-to-back transfer method at the border. This involves two trucks for each shipment -- one for the West Bank side and another for Israel -- increasing Palestinian farmers' shipping costs. Palestinian exports are also subjected to GOI inspections with sniffing dogs. Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley are able to use the crossing 24 hours/day, seven days a week, driving straight through the crossing without inspection.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: The GOI's decision to re-open the crossing, even for limited hours, for Palestinian exports is a direct result of USAID engagement -- and that of their contractors -- at the local level. End comment.

WALLES